Ecusta Trail Governance Update and Proposal
Presenter: Wilson Hooper, City Manager
August 5, 2024

Governance items

- ETAB 2.0 – reformed advisory group
- Decision buckets – who gets to decide what
- MOU with Henderson County regarding operations/management
  - Perhaps an agreement with FOET for additional services
- Integration of trail into other city matters

Background

- Brevard City Council formed the current Ecusta Trail Advisory Board in December 2021
- Its charge was to “oversee the financing, design and construction of the Ecusta Trail in Transylvania County.”
- Its membership consisted of:
  - “2 Elected Officials from the City of Brevard (Mayor & Chair) Parks, Trails & Rec Committee”
  - “2 Members from the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners or designees”
  - “1 Member from Tourism (Executive Director)”
  - “1 Member from Conserving Carolina”
  - “1 Member from Friends of the Ecusta Trail”
  - “1 Member from Brevard Blue Zones Project”
  - “2 At-Large Appointments”
  - “1 Chairman of the Henderson County Ecusta Trail Advisory Board Ex-Officio”
  - “Brevard City Manager”
  - “Brevard Planning Director”

Background (cont.)

- The ETAB's membership kept the long-shot project alive until the awarding of the RAISE and NSFLTP grants in summer 2023.
- Summer 2023 was a turning point for the project.
- Once it became clear that the project was likely going to happen, and its game changing potential became apparent, some questions arose about who the ultimate local decision makers were for trail-related matters.
- There's also the question of how the local government entities (Brevard and Henderson County) will cooperate to manage the trail once it's completed.

ETAB 2.0 membership

- City manager proposes updating the ETAB's membership to include appointees from groups whose areas of expertise tie in with the publicly stated goals of the trail.
  - Chairperson appointed by the City Council from amongst its membership (TBD)
  - Co-chairperson appointed by the City Council from amongst its membership (TBD)
  - One representative as recommended by the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority from amongst its membership or staff (Dee Dee Perkins)
  - One representative as recommended by the Friends of Ecusta Trail from amongst its membership (John Ditillo)
  - One representative as recommended by Conserving Carolina from amongst its membership or staff (Rebekah Robinson)
  - One representative as recommended by Transylvania Economic Alliance from amongst its membership or staff (Sheila Carland)
  - One representative as recommended by Heart of Brevard from amongst its membership or staff (Doug Miller)
  - One representative from the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners (Chapman)
  - Two at-large representatives as appointed by City Council (Hanley and Carli)
  - Brevard Mayor and representative from Henderson County RTAC to serve in ex-officio non-voting positions

ETAB 2.0 purpose

- New charter tasks them with making recommendations on matters related to trail usability and community impacts. Examples include:
  - On-trail amenities
  - Maintenance prioritization
  - Signage (types, contents, and placement)
  - Trail "rules" and user standards
  - Integration of Ecusta Trail into existing trails/facilities
  - Type and location of complementary amenities outside federally funded project footprint
  - Construction timing
  - Complementary programs (e.g. Trail Partners) intended to leverage the trail's presence to create community impact
  - Encroachment requests
- Other items may be referred by chairperson, city manager, or by referral of the full Council.

ETAB 2.0 membership cont.

- To be eligible, a participant must be deemed by the appointing authority (City Council), to be vested, with a personal or professional stake in the affairs of the City of Brevard and the Ecusta Trail. City residency is not required.
- The membership terms are indefinite. The board's membership, charge, and authority shall be reviewed every three years, with reappointments or new appointments made at that time.

ETAB 2.0 complementary working group

- A complementary working group will be convened to facilitate the work on the advisory group.
- Group members bring expertise in areas necessary to accomplish the community's stated trail goals.
  - Brevard City Manager (or his/her designee)
  - Brevard City Engineer
  - Brevard Planning Director and designated planning staff
  - Brevard Public Works Director
  - FOET executive director
  - TDA executive director
  - TEA executive director
  - HOB executive director
  - CC representative
  - RPO representative
  - NCDOT representative (until construction completed)
  - TPD representative (until construction completed)

Ecusta Trail "decision buckets"

STAFF	ETAB 2.0	City Council
• Bicycle design speed • Shoulder width/grade • Pavement thickness • Pavement cross slope • Maximum grade • Safety sign locations • Encroachment design • Bridge repair/replacement • Road crossing treatments	• On-trail amenities • Maintenance prioritization • Wayfinding/elective signage (types, content, placement) • Trail "rules" and user standards • Integration into existing trails/facilities • Type and location of complementary amenities outside federally funded project footprint • Construction timing • Complementary program intended to leverage trail's presence and create community impact • Encroachment requests within trail corridor in conjunction with staff's technical analysis • Realignment options at Mtn. Industrial Drive terminus • R5800 betterments to pursue • Trailhead (or trailheads) location(s)	• Extend to Main St./Rebrand Estatoe? • Landscaping and refuse collection service levels • Public safety service levels • Terms of interlocal agreement with HC • Future role of FOET • Non-grant financial commitments • Requests to amend scope of grant(s) • Possible update to UDO to integrate trail into land-use

Memorandum of Understanding

- So far only a very early draft has been circulated amongst staff
- Memorializes the relationship between the three parties and lays out each party's basic responsibilities
- Presumably will outline service levels, though those have yet to be negotiated.
- The current proposal is a three-way agreement between Brevard, HC, and Friends of Ecusta Trail
- City Manager may recommend having two separate agreements with HC and FOET.
- More to come on this topic.

Additional Considerations for Council

- Integrating the trail into the bigger picture
  - Revise land use regulations to orient new development to trail?
  - Shift funding priorities to build complementary infrastructure?
  - How do we leverage the trail's presence for community benefit?
  - Can our organizational structure execute these efforts?
- City Manager recommends holding another workshop in the fall to start working through these matters and HC/FOET terms.
- Later this evening you're asked to adopt the revised charter and membership for ETAB, and discuss whether to name Main St. as terminus.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS?